

IT STARTS WITH A CONVERSATION BY MARIA SOLOMON



As a single mother of three, young black males, education has always been something that I have tried to instill as a vital part of their success in life. I want this for them, because it was not the case for me.

I struggled with academics, especially math. Throughout my high school career, I did not have the support or someone to recognize that I needed the extra help. My academic struggles and other factors contributed to me ultimately dropping out of school. Now that I have my own children, I do not want them to struggle like I did. I am not naive, I know everybody struggles at some point with their education; but instead of a lack of support, my children have a mouthpiece, me.

I vowed that my children would receive the best education possible. They deserve that much. Recently, I moved my two youngest sons out of New Haven Public Schools. Personally, I felt like my children were not receiving the education they deserved, so we moved. Since the move, I have been extremely satisfied with their progress.

I was able to get my kids a quality education, because I was not afraid to speak out and stand up for their rights and move to a community with better public schools. However, I know that not all families have this same opportunity. That is why I was excited to attend the Hamden Community Conversation, hosted by ConnCAN.

Community conversations like the one held in January are important. It gives members of the public a chance to hear from our state leaders and to voice our own opinion. Far too often opportunities like the community conversation are missed or the cries that are needed to be heard most fall on deaf ears. I was enlightened by the questions that were asked by other parents and happy to see legislators eager to provide their best possible answers.

As parents we all want what is best for our kids. We want them to do better than we did ourselves. But we must lead by example; that's why I am currently enrolled in the National External Diploma program to get my high school diploma.

I want my children to know that the road may not be easy, but anything is possible if you work hard and never give up. I think that was the theme for the community conversation, the status of our state's education system may be uncertain and the road to fixing it may be a bumpy one, but getting there is not impossible if all children and families are given the support and opportunities they deserve.